

Authority/Scottish Natural Heritage research project, conducted by David Barbour, Allan Watt and Colin McBeath, yielded vacated mines of this species in Birch in two separate localities in Knapdale. The first was in a spruce plantation with 30% mix Birch near Loch Buic (Grid Ref. NR7988) and the other was in a birchwood besides Daill Loch (Grid Ref. NR8189), both in Knapdale Forest, Kintyre (VC101).

These new records could possibly indicate a recent invasion of Scotland by this species, although my own opinion is that it is a low density species that is under-recorded. At the Perthshire site both mines were close together on the succulent leaves of small shoots arising directly from the main trunk. The location of the mines at the other sites was not recorded.— K.P. BLAND, 35 Charterhall Road, Edinburgh EH9 3HS.

### **An outbreak of the Lackey moth, *Malacosoma neustria* L. 1758 (Lep. Lasiocampidae) in Beckton, east London, May 1995**

Early in May 1995 whilst checking the infestation of *Euproctis chrysorrhoea* (L. 1758) in Beckton, east London, I was surprised to see so many active “nests” of the Lackey, *Malacosoma neustria* (L. 1758). I had already collected a batch of ova of this moth from Sloe in February in the same area, but did not expect to be greeted by such an apparent population explosion. Soon after the initial sightings I counted the number of larval “nests” to be found. As the larvae were already well advanced, a “nest” for our purposes was any clearly-defined group of larvae feeding separately from another. As some of the larval clusters were so close together it cannot be assumed that they were not originally from the same egg batch.

Sixty-six were counted in all in a very small area alongside a busy main road, roughly running opposite the recently inaugurated Docklands Light Railway. The following foodplants were noted along with the numbers of larval “webs”: Sloe 43; Rose 11; Hawthorn 5; Hazel 2; Oak 1.

*E. chrysorrhoea* and *M. neustria* did not seem to be in competition as larvae were seen to share facilities on more than one occasion *i.e.* the Brown-tails would sit on the Lackey's “web”. Outside the Beckton area, larvae were noted singly on Hawthorn and on *Prunus* en masse in Walthamstow, also in May 1995.

Plant (1993) mentions *M. neustria* as an “...occasional pest species which can reach plague proportions in some years, although normally it causes little more than local defoliation of hedges”. Gómez de Aizpúrua (1988) cites this species as being a pest in Spain on “numerous occasions”. Soria (1987) details “an enormous quantity of larvae found in Mazarambroz (Toledo) in 1981 on Oak and describes serious outbreaks on Oak, specifically, *Quercus pyrenaica* Willdenow, in the sixties. In 1987, more than 20,000 hectares of Oak were attacked north of Madrid in the Sierra de Guadarrama, leading to defoliation on a massive scale.

**References:** Gómez de Aizpúrua, C., 1988. *Biología y Morfología de las Orugas*. Tomo VI. MAPA, Madrid; Plant, C., 1993. *Larger Moths of the London Area*. London Natural History Society; Soria, S., 1987. *Lepidopteros Defoliadores de Quercus pyrenaica* Will. 1805, MAPA, Madrid.

– GARETH E. KING, 22 Stoney Meade, Slough SL1 2YL.

### ***Pediasia fascelinella* (Lep.: Pyralidae): two more Kentish examples**

Following the first county record of this species that came to my light at Dungeness on 3rd August 1990 (*Ent. Rec. J. Var.* **103**: 51-52), I can report two more specimens recorded in Kent during 1994. The first was taken by John Owen at Dymchurch on 2nd July, and the second was taken by myself at Dungeness on 30th July.

The nearest existing British colony of this pyralid is in Suffolk (Parsons, 1993. *A review of the scarce and threatened pyralid moths of Great Britain*), and as all three of the Kentish records have occurred out of habitat and with immigrant species, I would suggest the Continent as their most likely place of origin.— SEAN CLANCY, “Delhi” Cottage, Dungeness, Romney Marsh, Kent TN29 9NE.

### **Large Tortoiseshell butterfly, *Nymphalis polychloros* L. in Kent**

During the early afternoon of Sunday 9th April 1995 Pamela Stafford and myself were exploring the old church at Elmsted in Kent when my attention was drawn to a dead Peacock butterfly in the central aisle.

Looking up at the windows we saw several more Peacocks and Small Tortoiseshells, presumably attracted to the warmth and light. We carefully removed them to a warm, horizontal gravestone in the churchyard and within a short time most had become active and flown away.

Using a broom we gently coaxed the higher butterflies down from the window, and during this operation a large butterfly dropped to the floor, and slowly opened its wings. We were astonished to see the unmistakable wing pattern of a Large Tortoiseshell. After removal to the gravestone, it sunned itself for a little while, allowing us ample opportunity to examine it closely, and then, in good light, it strongly flew away.

In all, 25 Peacocks and six Small Tortoiseshells and, of course, the Large Tortoiseshell, were “rescued”.— PETER BURNES, 1 Hinton Close, West Park, Eltham, London SE9 4SE.

### **Unseasonal Lepidoptera records from Rothamsted Insect Survey light-traps**

On 6.xii.1994 a single *Orthosia cerasi* Fabricius was caught in the RIS light-trap at Hamstreet, Kent (Site No. 472, O.S. grid ref. TR004 334) and o.i.e. *Cerastis rubricosa* Denis & Schiffermüller was caught at Rhandirmwyn, Dyfed (Site No. 346, OS grid ref: SN782 441). Both species usually fly in March and April. These extraordinarily early records probably result from